SOME NEW BOOKS.

Disraeli.

The latest book about *Disraeli* is a volume of 326 pages by WALTER SICHEL, published by the Funk & Wagnalls Company. The author is known to us by his exhaustive study of "Bolingbroke and His Times." It was natural that he should be attracted to a personality which, from many points of view, recalls the many sided and captivating St. John. There is a striking difference, however, between the favorite Minister of Victoria and the favorite Minister of Anne. Regarded as a statesman, the latter must be pronounced a failure, for his brief occupancy of the Premiership was succeeded by a long life spent in retirement. Both were men of letters, however, and both were masters of debate in the House of Commons. Neither was credited by his enemies with much political principle. Both had the capacity of making warm and tenacious friends, and both have found devoted advocates among the writers of history.

The plan followed by Mr. SICHEL is a judicious one. Two chapters are allotted to Disraeli's personality and career, while in the eight others the author discusses his relations to democracy and representation, to the labor question and the free trade movement, to the Church and theocracy; to the monarchy, to the colonies and the empire, to England's foreign policy, to America and Ireland, to English society and, finally, to literature. As the part which Disraeli played on the political stage is comparatively familiar, we shall here confine ourselves for the most part to what Mr. Sichel has to tell us about him considered as a man.

I.

In the chapter on Disraeli's personality we get two illuminating glimpses of him, one of his youth, the other of his age. In endeavoring to convey some likeness of "the wondrous boy that wrote 'Alroy,'" our author sketches a romantic figure, a southern shape in a northern setting, a kind of Mediterranean Byron, for the stock of the Disraelis was an offshoot of the Sephardim—those Semites who had never quitted the coast of the Midland Sea and were powerful in Spain before the Visigoths. "The form is lithe and slender, with an air of repressed alertness. The stature, above middle height. The head, long and compact; its curls are fantastic. The oval face is pale rather than pallid, with dark almond eyes of unusual depth, size and lustre under a veil of drooping lashes. The chin is pointed with decision. The expression holds one, being by turn keen and pensive; about it hovers a strange air of inner watchfulness and ambushed irony, half mocking in defiance, half eager in conscious power. A languid reserve marks his bearing; it conceals a smouldering vehemence; its observant silence prepares amazement, directly interest excites intercourse. Then indeed the scimitar, as it were, flashes forth unsheathed and dazzles by its breathless fence of words with ideas. This ardor is not always pleasant; it breathes of storm; it speaks out elemental passions, and grates against the smooth edges of civilization." Mr. Sichel goes on to say that in the London medley Disraeli, like his friend Bulwer, studied a posture. Dandyism and listlessness masked unsleeping energy. At Bradenham (his father's place), however, his constant retreat, the "Hurstly" of his last novel, all is natural and unconstrained. Here, at least, he is free. Here he "drives the quill" with his learned and famous father, reads and writes, meditates and is mirthful. Here, with a highly intellectual sister, who always believes in him and encourages him, he dreams, improvises, discourses. Others may treat him as a moonstruck Bombastes, but to the gentle insight of affection his lofty visions are real.

Now let us look at Disraeli grown old, at a time when many political vicissitudes had been succeeded by a splendid triumph. "Many of us," our author says, "remember him in his age as he sauntered dreamily and slowly with the late Lord Rowton, and none who ever heard one of his last orations in the House of Lords can forget how, even when he was in pain, he sprang from his seat with the quick movement of youth. The physical charm had disappeared. Few who gazed on that drawn countenance could have discerned in it the poetry and enthusiasm of his prime; only the unworn eyes preserved their piercing fires, but the sunken jaw was still masterful. A long discipline of iron self-control, much disillusion, growing disappointment with crowning triumphs, and, latterly, a great desolation, had subdued the fiercer force and the elastic buoyancy of his heyday. Yet the intellectual fascination and the spell of mind and spirit had deepened their outward traces. Fastidious discernment, dispassionate will, penetrating insight, courage, patience, a certain winning gentleness underneath the scorn of shams, stamped every lineament. Below habitual *insouciance* might be discerned intensity, bigness of soul and purpose. The arch of the noble brow retained its height and curves. Surrounded though he was by friends and flatterers, he looked lonelier than of old. 'I do not feel solitude,' he said; 'it gives one repose.'"

II.

We know from Lady John Manners, who has published her recollections of his later years, and from other sources as well, how he loved flowers and forestry, and study during the dinner hour, more than all the social glitter; how he communed with the unseen; how far reaching were his sympathies; what interest and curiosity he displayed in every form of career and purpose; how often to all the splendor which he had conquered, he preferred converse with the weak, the lowly, the suffering; how his wise counsel and inexhaustible resource were sought and coveted by cottagers, by the toilers whose cause he made his own, as well as by princes; how delicately considerate he was in keeping his appointments, and with all who came in contact with him; how he would sacrifice a keen personal wish rather than disturb a subordinate's pleasure or abridge a holiday, and yet how his playfulness of fancy mixed in pithy ironies with his very considerateness.

According to this biographer, Disraeli was truly unselfish, and was never known to blame an underling. If things went wrong, he took the whole burden on his own shoulders. He was at infinite pains to understand the conditions of labor and the organizations affecting it. We are told that the Buckinghamshire peasants still cherish his memory: "It may be said with truth that the deepest affections of this extraordinary man, whom vapid worldlings sneered at as a callous cynic, were reserved for his country, his county, his home and his friends, for effort and for distress." Mr. Sichel avers that many a young aspirant to fame in literature or public life has owed much to Disraeli's generous encouragement. He liked to dwell on the vicissitudes of men and things; his own motto, "Forti nihil difficile," represented his convictions. In private, when he was not entertaining, his habits were of the simplest. In two things only was he profuse: books and light. He loved to see every room of Hughenden illuminated with candles. He was utterly careless of money. It is related that when he accepted the Chancellorship of the Exchequer he sent for a well known money lender and asked for a necessary advance. "On what security?" inquired the sporting speculator. "That of my name and my career," was the answer. The money was at once forthcoming, and punctually paid. He cared next to nothing about the pleasures of the table. He would often make his greatest oratorical effort half dinnerless; his delight was, after the strain and the plaudits had ceased to betake himself in the dim hours of dawn to the supper which his devoted wife, who spared him every detail of household management, had prepared, there to recount to her the excitements of the debate.

Before recalling the public and touching tribute paid by her husband to Mrs. Disraeli, our author reminds us of the stern rebuke administered by him to the triflers overheard discussing the reasons for his marrying: "Because of a feeling to which such as you are strangers—gratitude." It was at Edinburgh in 1867 that his old ally, Baillie Cochrane (Lord Lamington) toasted Mrs. Disraeli as her illustrious husband's helper, and as having been his own dear friend for many years before Disraeli had met her. Disraeli began his reply with the remark that their mutual intimate "had certainly had every opportunity of studying the subject to which he has drawn attention." He went on to say: "I do owe to that lady all, I think, that I have ever accomplished, because she has supported me with her counsel, and consoled me by the sweetness of her mind and disposition." Six years after his marriage he dedicated the three volumes of his "Sybi": "To one whose noble spirit and gentle nature ever prompt her to sympathize with the suffering; to one whose sweet voice has often encouraged, and whose faith and judgment have ever guided, these pages; the most severe of critics, but—a perfect wife."

There is no doubt that Disraeli's marriage was the turning point in his career, and what had begun partly in interest soon developed into the warmest, the most entire and the most mutual affection. Mrs. Disraeli at great country houses always used to commence conversation with the query, "Do you like my Dizzy? Because, if you don't ——" From one country house, on a visit most advantageous to him, Disraeli departed, despite pressing remonstrance, on the plea that the "air disagreed with Mrs. Disraeli," but really because she had complained of their host's rudeness. Mr. Sichel recalls that when, at a much later date, Mr. Frith was painting a group in which Disraeli figured, Mrs. Disraeli whispered to the artist, "Remember one thing, if you don't mind: his pallor is his beauty." She was afraid that his complexion would be colored. To the last she would say, as she did during his interrupted speech at Aylesbury in 1847: "He mind them! Not a bit of it. He's a match for them all." Sir Horace Rumbold has chronicled how, at the scene of Disraeli's investiture as Earl, a sob was heard from the crowd. It was the grief of an old and faithful servant, sighing, "Ah! If only *she* had lived to see him now!"

Of Queen Victoria's affection for him our author will only say that it was called forth because he treated her not only as a sovereign, but as a woman. She grew to lean on his wisdom and his judgment. On more than one occasion he acted as mediator in her family. He was sincerely attached to her. We are reminded of his witticism when he was asked to give a reason for her favor: "I never argue," he said; "I never contradict, but I sometimes forget." Mr. Sichel declares that Disraeli's influence over the late Queen was more remarkable even than has hitherto been disclosed. We are told that while out of office he negotiated with extreme tact, under delicate circumstances, the peerage conferred on a most amiable prince, now no more; and, further, that at each stage of the negotiation Queen Victoria consulted and deferred to his counsel, kindness and resource. He also devised a means of providing the same lamented prince with an absorbing occupation.

III.

What Disraeli seems to have really valued in power was its opportunity of exerting influence. Otherwise, power was bittersweet. He once told an aspirant for high office that, as for its pleasures, they lay chiefly in contrasting the knowledge it afforded of what was really being done with the ridiculous chatter about affairs in the circles that one frequented. It is well known that his wit, his brightness of humor and lightness of touch long prevented many of his contemporaries from taking Disraeli seriously. Mr. Sichel speaks by the book when he says that literary statesmen are often belittled by their own generation; imaginative statesmen, always. They have usually to wait for posthumous renown. The stereotyped character imposed on Disraeli till his pluck and power appealed to the nation at large was largely due to the old Whigs, who for years refused to regard him with anything but amusement, yet whose drawing rooms had been the readiest to applaud the sparkling sallies of 1845 and 1846 that demolished the Premier whom they, too, wished to destroy. The tendency to treat Disraeli with derision was due, we repeat, to the old Whigs, not to the Peelites, who frankly hated him as an open and dangerous foe. Even the Liberals, many of whom he counted among his personal friends, when he warned them of the underground rumblings ominous of social earthquakes in Ireland, would shrug their shoulders; and when he was reported, glass in his eye, to have answered a Duchess, inquisitive about the exact date of the dissolution, with "You darling!" they would split their sides, and guffaw: "There he is again!" The Liberals agreed with his old family acquaintance, Bernal Osborne, to whom was imputed the heartlessness of saying, when Lord Beaconsfield was stricken with his fatal illness, "Overdoing it, as usual."

Disraeli's magnanimity—frankly acknowledged by Mr. Gladstone—is not generally known. Our author points out that on at least four occasions during the decade of the '50s he offered to sacrifice his personal position to Graham, Palmerston and Gladstone, successively, for the interest of his country and his party. In 1868 and 1869 he indignantly defended the last named statesman against the carping "tail" of his supporters, rebuking alike the "frothy spouters of sedition" and those who preferred remembrance of "accidental errors" to gratitude for "splendid gifts and signal services." His unstinted praise of worthy foes, his conduct even toward the ostracized Dr. Kenealy, are proofs of a leading trait in his character. He always forbore to strike an opponent to please the whim or the popular passion of the moment. Apropos of Mr. Gladstone, who himself paid a tribute to the absence of rancor in his rival, our author recalls an anecdote told him by the late Sir John Millais. When Disraeli stood for his last portrait—though suffering, he refused to sit—his "dear Apelles" noticed his gaze riveted on an engraving of the artist's fine portrait of the great leader of the Liberals. "Would you care to have it?" inquired Sir John; "I was rather shy of offering it to you." "I should be delighted to have it," was the reply. "Don't imagine that I have ever disliked Mr. Gladstone; on the contrary, my only difficulty with him has been that I could never understand him." Carlyle himself thawed when Disraeli, whom he had so long hysterically abused, but many of whose ideas he shared, offered him public recognition in a letter which gave as a reason for tendering him uninheritable honors, "I have remembered that you, too, like myself, are childless." Carlyle, who had aspersed him, never denied that he looked facts in the face without mistaking phantoms for them.

IV.

One of the best things in this volume is the parallel drawn after the manner of Plutarch and Dr. Johnson between Disraeli and Gladstone. It is a fine example of antithesis. Our author points out what is indubitable, that except in vigor of undaunted character and in a sort of inward loneliness, the qualities of the two men were opposed. "The intensity of the one was austere, imperious, imposing and didactic; that of the other buoyant, lively and poignant. Frequently the flippancy of certain leaders provoked Disraeli's gravity; more frequently the solemnity of others upset his own. Gladstone moved by violent reaction and hasty rebounds; Disraeli with a springy step, it is true, yet a step measured, wary and equal. Disraeli stamped himself on his age; it was often, on the contrary, the 'time spirit' that impressed itself on Mr. Gladstone, a list of whose changeful 'convictions' from 1836 to 1896 might fill a small volume. Again, Disraeli's utterance left a stronger sense of reserve power, of something serious behind the veil." Mr. Gladstone's phrases, though always sincere in the main, struck more the conscience of certain sections of the community; Disraeli's ideas, the national feelings. Mr. Gladstone's subtleties were those of a theologian—they did not quicken the lay mind; Disraeli's were the subleties of an artist—they put things in new perspectives. Mr. Sichel would say that "by nature and unconscious bent the one hid simplicity under the form of subtlety, while with the other the process was the converse. In oratory Mr. Gladstone convinced by height and redundance of enthusiasm, by depth of feeling and weight or wealth of words and gesture; Disraeli more by grasp, incisiveness and point; his imagination played all around many sides of his subject. Gladstone's eloquence resembled the storminess and the mist of the North Sea: Disraeli's the strange lights and shadows, the subtle and tideless lustre of the Mediterranean. As Mr. Gladstone warmed to his theme he increased in eloquence; his perorations were always great. It was, on the contrary, in peroration that Disraeli sometimes failed, except in his after dinner speeches, which never missed fire from start to finish." Our author thinks that Mr. Gladstone was saturated, Disraeli tinctured, with the classics. The former was essentially the scholar. He was Homeric, while Disraeli was Horatian and Tacitean. The latter's ready acquaintance with Latin masterpieces was shown when he first took the oath as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and hit off a most happy quotation on the spur of the moment. We are reminded also that once, when Disraeli was citing a classic in the House, he added: "Which, for the sake of the successful capitalists around me, I will now try to translate." In Mr. Sichel's opinion, Gladstone will not live through his books. He is pronounced "far more a writer than an author." A famous bookseller, with whom both statesmen frequently conversed, used to recount that Disraeli once inquired, as was his wont, what of new interest was forthcoming. The bookseller mentioned one of Gladstone's Vatican pamphlets. "No," was the answer, "please not that. Mr. Gladstone is a powerful writer, but nothing that he writes is literature."

For sheer insight into the march of ideas and reach of vision, our author holds that there is no comparison between the two statesmen. As Bolingbroke had foreseen that the Whig oligarchy of the eighteenth century could only be overthrown by a "Patriot King," so, even in the '40s, Disraeli perceived that the coming choice lay between absolute democracy and a monarchical democracy. Afterward—in the early '50s, while monarchy in England was still far from popular—he laid his plans, as is apparent from his contributions to his organ, the *Press*, in 1853, to popularize monarchy and educate democracy before enfranchising it, and—but not till that was accomplished—to reimperialize Great Britain. "He has not," he wrote in 1853 of Lord John Russell, "comprehended that for the last twenty years the choice has been between the maintenance of those institutions and habits of thought which preserve monarchy and that gradual change into absolute democracy, to which Tocqueville somewhere rashly asserted that all the tendencies of our age were impelling the destinies of Europe. The Whigs should have been conservative of the reform constitution, and have developed it."

Elsewhere, completing his parallel, Mr. Sichel opines that "Gladstone was, perhaps, more of an apostle; Disraeli, of a seer. Gladstone owned a noble heart, with lofty spiritual standards and an enormous quantity of moral resentment; but his church views colored his life as much as his religious convictions, while his minute and perplexing scruples too often changed the forms of his enthusiasm, led zeal to chime with prejudice, and sometimes sent him astray altogether into self-deception." Gladstone, indeed, is here conceived as a strange compound of diverse elements—of Highlander and Lowlander, of Scotland, Liverpool, Oxford and Italy. "In some respects he might even be termed the Dante of politics; in others, he was occasionally deemed its Ignatius Loyola. Disraeli, on the other hand, depended on his singular force of independence, native insight and foresight. Those who admired the early Gladstone as Sir Galahad never wished him to sit on the seat of Merlin; on the other hand, Gladstone himself perpetually imagined that in Disraeli he detected Machiavelli or even Cagliostro." With reference to Disraeli Gladstone would, perhaps, have addressed England with: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" while Disraeli might have retorted with the witticism of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough, on the eagerness of James II. to drag his country to heaven with him. It was just Disraeli's originality and length of view that caused him to be maligned as well as misunderstood. By some, indeed, his conduct toward Peel was not unnaturally eyed askance. Yet in Mr. Morley's life of Gladstone, Lord John Russell is to be found vindicating his own share in that transaction, and Sir James Graham himself admitting that Peel provoked what he suffered. In the eyes of many Gladstone, in his contest with Disraeli, was Homer's "old man of the sea," trying to hold Proteus; yet none was to prove more Protean through enlarging aspirations than the "Grand Old Man" himself. Summing up his conclusions, Mr. Sichel suggests that perhaps Gladsone regarded the world more as the "Pilgrim's Progress," Disraeli more as "Vanity Fair." Gladstone had more sail, Disraeli more ballast. "The one floated on waves of agitation; the other desired to make government strong by steadying the people and attaching them to institutions. Gladstone constantly viewed the State from the standpoint of his particular church opinions; Disraeli, for his part, believed that the principles of the revolution of 1688 had never been perfected by the due development of popular institutions. He agreed with Pym that 'the best form of government is that which doth dispose and actuate every part and member of a State to the common good.'"

It is not denied, of course, that Disraeli had his foibles, though he was too proud to be very vain. His faults of temperament were occasionally impressed too deeply both on his life and on his literary productions. He tended to overstrain his lights and shadows. His imagination sometimes ran riot in colors, and always tended to exaggerate the forms of events, though hardly ever their significance, which he was often the first to divine. He is said to have cherished some superstitions about lucky days and unlucky tints, but for these Mr. Sichel does not vouch. He does vouch, however, for the fact that Disraeli was once seen by intimates to wear a green velvet smoking coat, though on one of the few occasions on which he troubled the newspapers he refuted the slander of having, when young, appeared in green trousers. In phrase as in taste he was naturally extravagant, but his epigrams were never fabricated for the sake of a paradox, and were always summaries of reflection and wisdom. They were light, not frivolous; they were imaginative proverbs. There never was a wittier man, and his wit lent itself to his ironic humor. It was said of him by an intimate that one of his sentences—in conversation he was sparing of them—left a more vivid impression than a long talk with others of consummate talent. Like all celebrated wits, he suffered both from the ascription of his own *bon mots* to others and from having those of others fathered upon him. Thus the "without a redeeming vice," said not about Gladstone, but about Lord Hatherly, was his, not Westbury's; while the "dinner all cold except the ices" was said not by him, but by Sir David Dundas. Disraeli's pithy sentences were simply manifestations of his naturally laconic turn of mind.

V.

Perhaps the most effective feature of this book is the precision with which the scope and nature of the work done by Disraeli in politics is defined. He was a man born with aristocratic perceptions, yet with a bent which is correctly described as "popular" rather than "democratic," in the strict sense of those terms. Democracy in the concrete he considered as the unsettlement of compact nationality, through the undue preponderance of a single class; democracy in the abstract he considered as merely a lever for ambitious tribunes. The welfare of the people, however, was ever his chief concern, and he was keenly alive to the fact that it was continually obstructed by the side aims of those vociferous on its behalf. When he appeared on the political horizon, neither of the great historical parties really felt any sympathy for the people at large. The Tories dreaded "radicalism," because they were blind to the possibilities of its adoption into the order of the State. Of the Whigs, democratic enthusiasms were at once the tools and the abhorrence. Disraeli determined to infuse them into those free yet settled institutions of which the Tories were the natural but forgetful guardians. His main purpose, from the outset, was to implant the new ideas of freedom on the ancient soil of order; to engraft them productively without uprooting the native "undergrowth," to harmonize the modern democratic idea with those English traditions which had always harbored its older forms. The task which he set himself was to accommodate federal to feudal principles; to render democracy in England national and natural; to popularize leadership; to make democracy aristocratic in the truest sense of the term; to unlock the closed aristocracy of caste, and to revive the open aristocracy of excellence, wherever displayed. From this ruling purpose flowed directly Disraeli's idea of Great Britain's destiny and responsibility.

VI.

Disraeli's relation to English society was unique, and his attitude toward it was highly characteristic. His father, Isaac Disraeli, bookworm, recluse and dreamer, gave the boy a foothold in the literary world. Among the elder Disraeli's intimates were a shrewd solicitor, Mr. Austin, and his clever young wife, a literary coquette of talent, the aunt of the future Sir Henry Layard. With the Austins young Disraeli journeyed in Italy and Germany. From his father's library he thus emerged on a larger world. In the course of his long Eastern travels he encountered the most opposite types, and had some curious adventures. For example, in Spain he rescued a lady from robbery. On the Ægean he armed and drilled the crew of a vessel, on which he was a passenger, against pirates. In Palestine, with difficulty and courage, he forced his way into the Mosque of Omar. In Egypt a Pasha asked him to draft a constitution. After his return to England his first book made him the lion of several seasons. He and Bulwer divided the honors of Bath, then still fashionable. Lyndhurst grew to depend on his assistance and even accepted his advice. Disraeli escorted him when, as Chancellor, he was present at Kensington at the accession of Queen Victoria. Lyndhurst's daughter became an associate of Disraeli's sister; nothing gave Disraeli more pleasure than Lyndhurst's visits to his father.

Next ensued his acquaintance with D'Orsay and his intimacy at Gore House, with its high Bohemian wits and low Bohemian buffoons; its loose celebrities; its "man of destiny," Louis Napoleon; its laughter and its tears; its Watteau-like parterres and the generous, erring Egeria of the grot. Then came his introduction to the fascinating circle of the Sheridans, which united sparkling talent with entrancing beauty and extraordinary charm. Lastly came his admission to the duller round of High Mayfair—the Londonderrys and the Buckinghams. Among diplomatists at this period he knew Pozzo di Borgo. He saw, or met, or knew, the fathers or grandfathers of most of the aristocrats whom forty years afterward he was to lead. Resolved from the first, as he said in an early letter, "to respect himself, the only way to make others respect you"; an outrageous dandy; sometimes in debt; often in scrapes; always in good humor; he had surveyed the whole kaleidoscope of society, artificial as well as natural, before or soon after he turned 30 years of age.

To understand Disraeli's novels, which reflected his social experiences, it is needful to keep in mind that English society in the days of his young manhood still retained much of the Regency's tinsel. Society, indeed, was not then quite the Dresden china shop, with porcelain figures of beaux and boxers, of topers and bulldogs, of satyrs and nymphs, of city swains and simpering shepherdesses, that it had been ten or fifteen years before. Byron, with his savage sincerity, may be said to have dashed that smooth farrago to fragments. It remained, nevertheless, a society of veneer and affectation. It was a less natural age than our own, with fewer ideals and less outward movement. At the same time, it was a more boisterous age.

Public opinion exercised far less pressure upon violent individualities. It was at once a coarser, a more sentimental and a more romantic, if a more bombastic, age than ours. There still lingered the curiosity of Dr. Johnson's time for the tittle-tattle of voyagers and the curiosities of barbarism. It was not, in the main, a more material age, or, under the surface, a much more selfish one. It certainly was a generation far more fastidious and exclusive; at the same time, it was more appreciative of genius. Society then used to depend on conversation much more than it does now, when there is so much hurry, so much wealth, so many amusements, so little privacy and so much printed about it.

Disraeli witnessed in his long lifetime a great transformation of society. The Macaronis were replaced by the Beaux; the Beaux, in their turn, by the more florid Dandies; until, at last, in the '70s, appeared the Swells, the heavy if grand Blunderbores, sworn to bachelor indulgence, who thought that "every woman should marry, but no man," the exception only being if a girl sprang from an affectionate family, with good shooting and first rate claret. Disraeli was interested in the Swells. In a measure he had created them, because he had reconciled the people to the nobles, and "Swell" was a term embodying the people's homage. In this phase of social development, however, Disraeli saw something comic and barbaric. "St. Aldegonde," himself a gigantic "Swell," could not bear the "Swells." When he met them he described them as "a social jungle, in which there was a great herd of animals." With the "Swells" came in something of the free-and-easiness which has leavened English society with its license and its slang. "Free-and-easiness is all very well," once laughed Disraeli, "but why not be a little freer and a little less easy?" With the "Swells" came also another social change, the diffusion not only of wealth, but of taste. A great lady assures "Lothair" that he will be surprised to see so many well dressed and good looking people at the opera whom he had never beheld before.

VII.

Disraeli held that the secrets of success in life are: knowledge of your own capacities, constancy of purpose and mastery of your subject. He laid especial stress upon the first named qualification. "What we want is to discover the character of a man at his birth and to found his education upon his nature." And again: "Until men are educated with reference to their *nature*, there will be no end of domestic *fracas*." It was his conviction that national literature ought to be native and not imported. "The duty of education is to give ideas. When our limited stock of ideas was embedded in the literature of two dead languages it was necessary to acquire those languages. But now each nation has its literature. Let education be confined to a national literature, and we should soon perceive the beneficial effects upon the mind of the students. Study would then be a profitable delight. I pity the poor victim of the grammar and the lexicon. The Greeks, who were masters of composition, were ignorant of all languages but their own. They concentrated their genius on the study of expression in one tongue. To this they owe the blended simplicity and strength of style which the imitative Romans, with all their splendor, never attained." Disraeli asserted that the mere fact of copying or assuming ideas deprives them of their native virtue, and that all which is second hand loses the vigor and flavor of its originals in imitating them.

It is well known that during the greater part of his life Disraeli was handicapped by the charge that he was an "alien." Concerning this alleged alien aloofness, the present biographer discourses at some length. He reminds us that Mazarin was an "alien," not to speak of such examples as Alferoni and Ripperda. In the eighteenth century a Scotch Premier was in English eyes an "alien." Augustus was partly, Napoleon wholly, an "alien." What but "aliens" were Manin, Gambetta, Lasker, Midhat and Emin? This, at least, Mr. Sichel affirms with confidence, that nobody understood his countrymen more shrewdly and at the same time more sympathetically than Disraeli. "His was no sham patriotism, and he loved John Bull fondly, even when he poked fun at him. Nor had any pondered more deeply the lessons which history imparts. There are, however, two grains of truth in the reproach. He did regard the world and its history as a fleeting show. He believed in recurring cycles. What is now old was once new; what is new will be one day old. So long as individuals did their best, what did it matter? One civilization succeeds another, and the last state of a mighty nation is often worse than the first. The 'whirligig of Time brings about its revenges.' In this sense—the historical and philosophical sense—he might be called an indifferentist." But if Disraeli understood England, it took long for his countrymen to understand him in the same way. When they came to do so he met with the generous appreciation which immense bravery and perseverance always receive in the end; but meanwhile, for many a decade, his steps were dogged with jealous malice. He "educated" his followers, but suspicion and misunderstanding hampered his every move. During two spans of some six years each (without counting his early period) he had to play a losing game with an unruffled brow, an encouraging smile and unwearied resource. He had to hearten the despairing, the recalcitrant, the slothful and the sullen. He had to deplore the stupidity of misused opportunities, he had to humor the engrossers of office; and, even in the intervals of power, to bend his neck to the grinding stone of finance. His hour struck at last. At 64 he began to govern England on lines planned and with projects pondered full thirty years earlier. Even then he had to confront anonymous endeavors to sap his leadership from quarters which should have disarmed suspicion.

VIII.

There is no doubt that, for a man of Disraeli's sensitive temperament, the greater part of his life had been fraught with inexpressible sadness. No one was more cut to the quick by contumely or impertinence; no one was more determined to hide the wound. "If," Jowett once said, "Dizzy were on the brink of the bottomless pit, and each moment about to fall into it, his look would never betray the fact; such is his pluck and power of contenance." From as far back as he could remember, and until he became the unchallenged leader of his party, he had known what it was to feel the rankling sense of unjust, if not insolent treatment. As a boy, at once proud and gentle, he had found that his family were sometimes eyed askance as foreigners. He wished to enter a public school; it was deemed unadvisable. The harder side of his nature then began to assert itself. He would triumph over all, hew down every obstacle. His father suggested the University. He rejected the offer. Why waste in words the time that might prove a school for deeds? "A miserable lot is mine," he said, "to feel everything and be nothing." He believed himself, however, to be predestined, appointed, reserved. As he grew older the conviction deepened. "Am I a man, and a man of strong passions and deep thoughts? And shall I, like a vile begger, upon my knees crave the rich heritage that is my own by right?" But how was he to attain his own? The thought bewildered, oppressed and imbittered him. "Everything is mysterious,' though I have always been taught the reverse." The time came when he began to lay it down as a principle that "all considerations must yield to the gratification of my ambition." Life without power, and power that he felt to be deserved, was intolerable. His father remonstrated; warned the young man against the fatal tyranny of the imagination. "I think," said the elder Disraeli, "you have talents, indeed, for anything that a rational being can desire to attain; but you sadly lack judgment." The boy replied: "I wish, sir, to influence men. I am impressed with a most earnest and determined resolution to become a practical man. You must not judge of me by my boyish career. The very feelings that made me revolt at the discipline of schools will insure my due subordination in the world. I took no interest in their petty pursuits, and their minute legislation interfered with my extended views." In answer, he was admonished that a nature so "headstrong and imprudent" would lead to situations ridiculous and even dangerous; that his lack of regulated balance would warp his excellent instincts. The youth continued to fret and brood and calculate. He felt method within him as well as frenzy. In his old age he was once driving past Bradenham (where his father had lived), with a lady who knew how happy his home relations had been. "Ah," he sighed, "there is where I passed my miserable youth." "Miserable," she replied, "impossible; surely you were happy there." "Not then. I was devoured by an irresistible ambition which I could not gratify."

In spite of his prevailing despondency, he seems never to have lost his self-confidence. We are reminded of the story of his meeting with Lord Melbourne and of his reported answer to the inquiry "what the Premier could do for him," "I wish to be Prime Minister." His friend, Mrs. Austin, in extreme old age recalled a party at her house about the same date, when, amid laughter and surprise, the young Disraeli explained what his plans were for England, "when I am Prime Minister." "You will see," he said, bringing his fist down on the mantelpiece, "I *shall* be Prime Minister." He felt, as he wrote to his sister, after attending a great debate in the House of Commons, that he "could floor them all." His trust in himself, like his sister's in him, was colossal.

IX.

This study of Disraeli's personality and ideas necessarily includes a chapter on his relations to literature. When we speak of an "artificial" style, we mean, or ought to mean, one unnatural to the author. The present biographer contends that Disraeli's style was perfectly natural to *him*, and points out that it altered little. Unquestionably, his style would not have been natural to the ordinary man, which, of course, is the reason why it seemed to most persons affected. Mr. Sichel admits that even in his great political novels, with all their deep thought and striking insight, their absolute originality and stimulating suggestiveness, we get at times a whiff of the atmosphere of the perfumer's shop rather than of the fresh air. Even "Sybil" cries out: "Oh! The saints, 'tis a merry morn!" "Coningsby" meets his lady love at a ball which is "a dispensation of almost supernatural ecstasy." In "Lothair" itself we revert to "barbs" and "jennets." Our author thinks that these later defects were partly due to the reaction against the restraint, repression and formality compelled by Disraeli's political career. They were a reaction in form rather than artificial in substance. They meant something, and they pressed it home. Disraeli was always a fantastic; but fantastics—for example Cervantes—have held high rank in literature. Fantasy is different from frippery. As our author would put it, "fantasy is the flicker of firelight, not the flare of gas."

It is, of course, always hard for originality to win a first hearing from the public. Browning once said in a letter that to fasten the attention of the British public some stroke of style is required. Browning himself was an example of the truth of this averment; Carlyle was another; the latter's early essays are utterly lacking in the compound of Jean Paul's German and old Mrs. Carlyle's Scotch, out of which Carlylese was evolved. Ruskin is a third instance. Mr. Sichel points out that Disraeli in his correspondence is far more free and flowing than in his books. Among those books there is the least trace of apparent affectation in "Coningsby," which most readers would acknowledge to be the best political novel in any language. Reviewing them as a whole, the author of the present biography would say that Disraeli's novels are creative and afford, as a whole, a marvellous medium for the conveyance of thought. Some bedizenment there is undoubtedly, and there are many gauds of fancy; parts, indeed, of the characterization may be said to be written in italics. It is true, also, that some of the persons are waxworks; but none of the principal characters is, and Disraeli's movement of ideas, as well as his ideas of movement, display a flexibility rarely joined to such piercing penetration. Next to Disraeli's three great political novels, and, in some respects above them, our author would rank "Venetia," which, in his judgment, has never met with adequate appreciation. It is certain that, even when he was florid, Disraeli was fastidious. He relieved his last illness by correcting the proofs of his latest speeches for Hansard—"The Dunciad of Politics." "I will not," he said, "descend to history speaking bad grammar."

About national literature Disraeli held views which sprang from his theories of life. He considered that modern Europe depended overmuch on ideas derived from Rome, Greece and Palestine. "At the revival of letters we behold the portentous spectacle of national poets communicating their inventions in an exotic tongue. They sought variety in increased artifice of diction, and substituted the barbaric clash of rhyme for the melody of the lyre." Spain, he thought, offered the best field for a national novel. "The outdoor life of the natives induces a variety of the most picturesque manners, while their semi-civilization makes each district retain with barbarous jealousy its peculiar customs." For the critics Disraeli had a smile at the first, as at the last. They admired, he said, "what had been written in haste and without premeditation, and generally disapproved of what had cost me much forethought and been executed with great care. My perpetual efforts at being imaginative were highly reprobated. I puzzled them, and no one offered a prediction as to my future career. The hour came when I thought no more of criticism. The breath of man has never influenced me much, for I depend more upon myself than upon others."

X.

This book closes, as it opened, with the author's eye fixed upon Disraeli's personality, ideas and imagination. The closing paragraph is worthy of the theme. The fact is recalled that when Disraeli died, amid national mourning, the late Lord Salisbury, after singling out for especial laudation his unquenchable zeal for the glory of Britain, lasting to a period when "the gratification of every possible desire negatived the presumption of any inferior motive," alluded to his "patience, his gentleness, his unswerving and unselfish loyalty to his colleagues and fellow laborers." The time came when not even his opponents would deny that Disraeli's moral character was a high one. Most candid men will concur in Mr. Sichel's judgment that, unquestionably, Disraeli, like Gladstone, raised the tone of Parliamentary life from that of the days when politics meant merely a squabble for place and a toss-up as to whether England should be ruled by Tory nobles or by Whigs. Disraeli's tone may not always have chimed with certain forms or formulas of earnestness, but he acted up to his own high standard. "It is impossible," said the late Lord Granville, "to deny that Lord Beaconsfield played a great part in British history. No one could deny his rare and splendid gifts or his force of character, a force that will always appeal to England. But," concluded the speaker, after noticing Disraeli's tolerance and forbearance, "he undoubtedly possessed the power of appealing to the imagination, not only of his countrymen, but of foreigners, and that power is not destroyed by death." As Bismarck said of him at the Congress of Berlin, "Disraeli *is* England."

M. W. H.

HOW BUSHMAN FINDS HIS WAY.

Remembers Every Detail of Route Over Which He Has Passed.

From Forest and Stream.

What appears marvellous and positively uncanny to a town person is simple to a bushman.

Years of continuous observation develop the bump of locality, every object has a place and meaning to a trapper; his eye is ever on the alert, and what his eye sees is photographed on the brain and remains there for future reference at any time he may require it.

This bump of locality is highly developed in all Indians and whites who have passed many years in the bush. Without the faculty of remembering objects a bushman could not find his way through the forests.

Providing the trapper has once passed from one place to another, he is pretty sure to find his way through the second time, even if years should have elapsed between the trips. Every object from start to finish is an index finger pointing out the right path. A sloping path, a leaning tree, a moss covered rock, a slight elevation in land, a cut in the hills, the water in the creek, an odd looking stone, a blasted tree—all help as guides as the observant trapper makes his way through a pathless forest.

Of course, this tax on the memory is not required of trappers about a settled part of the country, but I am telling of what is absolutely necessary for the safety of one's life in the far-away wilds of the North, where to lose one's self might mean death.

I followed an Indian guide once over a trail of 280 miles, whereon we snowshoed over mountains, through dense bush, down rivers and over lakes. To test my powers of a retentive memory, the following winter when despatches again had to be taken to headquarters, I asked the Indian to allow me to act as guide, he following.

On that long journey of ten or twelve days, always walking and continually thinking out the road, I was in doubt only once. We were standing on the ice; a tongue of land stood out toward us, a bay on either side. The portage leaving the lake was at the bottom of one of these bays, but which? The Indian had halted almost on the tails of my snowshoes, and enjoyed my hesitation, but said nothing. To be assured of no mistake, I had to pass over the whole of last winter's trip in my mind's eye up to the point on which we stood. Once the retrospect caught up with us, there was no further trouble. Our route was down the left-hand bay.

When the Indian saw me start in that direction, he said: "A-a-ke-pu-ka-tan" ("Yes, yes, you are able").

The most difficult proposition to tackle is a black spruce swamp. The trees are mostly of a uniform size and height, the surface of the snow is perfectly level, and at times our route lies miles through such a country, and should there be a dull leaden sky or a gentle snow falling there is nothing for the guide to depend on but his ability to walk straight.

It has been written time and again that the tendency, when there are no landmarks, is to walk in a circle.

By constant practice those who are brought up in the wilds acquire the ability to walk in a straight line. They begin by beating a trail from point to point on some long stretch of ice, and in the bush, where any tree or obstruction bars the way, they make up for any deviation from the straight course by a give-and-take process, so that the general line of march is straight.

During forty years in the country I never knew an Indian or white bushman to carry a compass. Apart from a black spruce swamp, it would be no use whatever.

In going from one place to another the contour of the country has to be considered, and very frequently the "longest way round is the shortest way home." A ridge of mountains might lie between the place of starting and the objective point, and by making a detour round the spur, one would easier reach his destination, rather than to climb up one side and down the other.

If I were to tell you as a fact that when a bushman sees the track of some wild animal in the snow he can tell you not only the name of the animal, but if it was male or female, within an hour of the time the tracks were made, if it was calm or blowing and the direction of the wind at that time, and many other minor things, you would think this wonderful. Yet, as wonderful as this may appear and hardly to be credited, an Indian boy of 10 or 12 can read this page from nature as easy as one of us can read a page of print.

Love of Mother Among Japanese.

From the Outlook.

Public demonstration of affection is most repugnant to the good taste of the Japanese, and it is the absence of this which is so generally mistaken for a lack of genuine feeling. I recall one man who was so devoted to his mother (though I doubt whether he could ever have been said to have "talked about" her, that when she died, while he was abroad, his depression was so profound that my husband watched him with anxiety lest he should commit suicide. The stoical training may render more unsympathetic a coarse nature; but repression to the refined soul brings an exquisite capacity for pain scarcely conceivable by those who are free to give utterance to every emotion.

Another man said to me, "I rarely speak of my mother, for a foreigner does not understand that a Japanese mother may be just as dear to her son as his to him and by the Japanese it is not expected that one should utter one's deepest feeling." That same son fainted with grief when his mother died, and when consciousness returned rose to make light of a "little dizziness," without reference to its cause. To this day, whenever he goes from home, he carries with him his mother's letters, mounted on a beautiful roll of ivory and brocade, and on the anniversary of her passing beyond his mortal ken quietly devotes a portion of the day to meditation and special thought of her. Even to his wife, despite the closest bond of love, he says not, "This is the day of my mother's death."